

Message Text

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TAGS: IA-ECOSOC, OAS, EGEN

SUBJECT: TWELFTH IA-ECOSOC MINISTERIAL MEETING

REF: STATE 078019

SUMMARY: TWELFTH ANNUAL IA-ECOSOC MEETING BEGAN APRIL 12
WITH GENERAL DEBATE. ONLY CHILE, U.S. AND HONDURAS RE-
PRESENTATIVES SPOKE. WORKING COMMITTEES BEGIN LATER AND
THEY WILL GO MORE DEEPLY INTO THE SUBJECTS OF TRADE AND
DEVELOPMENT, WHICH PROMISE TO BE THE PRINCIPAL TOPICS OF
THE MEETING. (INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS SHOULD BE QUITE ROU-
TINE.) LATIN AMERICAN SPEAKERS EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE
OF U.S. POLICIES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF LATIN AMERICA.

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN'S STATEMENT ATTRACTED CONSIDER-
ABLE ATTENTION AND FAVORABLE COMMENT ALTHOUGH THE SPEECH
WAS LOW KEY AND CONTAINED NOTHING REALLY NEW. AMBASSADOR
MARCHAND OF PERU EXPLICITLY RESERVED THE RIGHT TO REOPEN
THE GENERAL DEBATE DURING THE CONFERENCE. THIS PROBABLY
MEANS THAT THE LATIN AMERICANS ARE THINKING IN TERMS OF
COMMENTING ON PRESIDENT CARTER'S SPEECH TO THE OAS APRIL

14 PRIOR TO ADJOURNMENT OF THE CONFERENCE. THIS IS FIRST LATIN-CARIBBEAN-UNITED STATES MEETING OF ANY CONSEQUENCE ON ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN THE HEMISPHERE SINCE THE CHANGE OF ADMINISTRATION, AND IT WILL TO SOME EXTENT FORESHADOW

THE PRINCIPAL THEMES FOR MEETINGS OF ECLA, THE IDB BOARD OF GOVERNORS, THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND EVENTUALLY THE SPECIAL OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. REPRESENTATION AT THIS IA-ECOSOC INCLUDES PANAMA'S MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND MEXICO'S UNDER SECRETARY OF COMMERCE AS WELL AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN. OTHER COUNTRIES ARE REPRESENTED BY THEIR OAS AMBASSADORS. OPENING SPEECHES BY ARGENTINE AND ECUADOREAN AMBASSADORS, AS OFFICIALS OF WELCOMING OAS ORGANS, WERE STRAIGHT-FORWARD DISCUSSIONS OF LATIN AMERICA'S PRESENT ECONOMIC SITUATION. EMPHASIS WAS ON TRADE RELATIONS, WITH REFERENCE ALSO TO THE AREA'S IMMENSE FOREIGN DEBT AND TO GREATLY INCREASED ENERGY COSTS AS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN OF RECENT YEARS. BOTH SPEAKERS ALLUDED TO GLOBAL NATURE OF NORTH-SOUTH ECONOMIC QUESTIONS AND TO THE SPECIAL INTERESTS OF LATIN AMERICA AS A REGION IN THESE QUESTIONS. ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR ALSO MADE OBLIQUE REFERENCE TO HUMAN RIGHTS BY ASSERTING THAT SOVEREIGN POLITICAL AFFAIRS SHOULD NOT AFFECT ECONOMIC RELATIONS. CHILEAN STATEMENT MADE PERFUNCTORY GESTURE TO U.S. PROPOSALS FOR A SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSEMBLY MADE LAST JUNE IN SANTIAGO, EXPRESSING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INTEREST IN CONSIDERING THEM FURTHER, BUT SPEECH WAS DEVOTED PRIMARILY TO DEFENSE OF CHILE'S CURRENT INTERNAL ECONOMIC POLICIES.

2. ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN IN HIS SPEECH NOTED THE IMPORTANCE OF U.S.-LATIN ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN TRADE, INVESTMENT, AND FINANCIAL FLOWS. HE POINTED OUT THAT LATIN AMERICA IS OFTEN IN THE VANGUARD OF NORTH-SOUTH DEVELOPMENTS ON A GLOBAL SCALE, AND NOTED ALSO THE MIDDLE LEVEL OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPRESENTED BY THE REGION AND THE IMPLICATIONS THIS MIDDLE INCOME LEVEL HAVE FOR ITS GLOBAL ROLE. HIS SPEECH TOUCHED ON TRADE MATTERS, SUCH AS SUGAR AND SHOES, AND ON HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS FOR MULTILATERAL LOANS. THE IA-ECOSOC, HE CONCLUDED, "IS NOW ONE OF THE KEY LINKS BETWEEN A REGIONAL AND GLOBAL APPROACH TO TODAY'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. IT REPRESENTS THE MOST IMPORTANT REGIONAL GROUPING IN DEVELOPING THE ISSUES OF THE NORTH AND SOUTH." (TEXT OF SPEECH BY SEPTTEL).

3. THE FINAL SPEECH, BY THE HONDURAN DELEGATE, WAS A THOROUGH TREATMENT OF U.S.-LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC RELATIONS AND THE SERIES OF MEETINGS OCCURRING IN HEMISPHERE AND WORLDWIDE ON PRESSING ECONOMIC ISSUES. HE DEVOTED MUCH OF HIS TIME TO TRADE QUESTIONS, AND MOST EFFECTIVELY

TO THE PROBLEM POSED BY DEBT BURDENS ACCUMULATING THROUGHOUT LATIN AMERICA. HE COMMENTED ON REDUCTIONS IN OUR IDB APPROPRIATIONS INFLICTED BY CONGRESS. HE EXPRESSED REGRET THAT CONGRESS DOES NOT AGREE WITH SEVERAL OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITIONS ON ECONOMIC MATTERS VITAL TO LATIN AMERICA. WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO LATIN AMERICANS, HE SAID, IS NOT DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT BUT THE END RESULT FOR LATIN AMERICA. AFTER PAYING TRIBUTE TO U.S. EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF LATIN AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT OVER THE YEARS, HE IMPLIED THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE U.S. HAD A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR LATIN AMERICA PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELD OF TRADE.

4. AMBASSADOR MARCHAND OF PERU IN CONCERT WITH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL AGREED THAT THE GENERAL DEBATE COULD BE REOPENED. THIS COULD MEAN THAT THE LATINS WILL USE THIS FORUM TO COMMENT ON PRESIDENT CARTER'S SPEECH TO THE OAS ON PAN AMERICAN DAY, APRIL 14. VANCE

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